

12.538 SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS AND COMMUNITY CAMERAS

Reference:

Procedure 12.715 - Property and Evidence:
Accountability, Processing,
Storage, and Release

Definitions:

Surveillance cameras are used to monitor criminal activity in a particular area. The system will not be used to infringe on an individual's right to privacy.

Community cameras are a network of security cameras in business districts, crime "hot spots" and targeted residential areas that are recorded over the Internet. Neighborhoods and law enforcement can leverage the system for e-surveillance, deterrence of criminal activities, and footage for prosecution of captured criminal activities.

Purpose:

To establish a procedure regarding the use of community and surveillance cameras.

To establish guidelines regarding the operation, tracking, security, and maintenance of the community and surveillance systems, and data.

Policy:

All images, videotapes, and compact discs are the property of the Cincinnati Police Department and are not to be duplicated and/or used without authorization.

All images, videotapes, and compact discs deemed to have evidentiary value necessary for prosecution of captured criminal activities will be treated as evidence.

Any maintenance or service of the community cameras or the surveillance cameras will be performed by authorized service technicians only.

Procedure:**A. Surveillance Cameras****1. Operating Surveillance Camera Equipment**

- a. Surveillance camera equipment, installed at the front desk, is the responsibility of the officer assigned to the front desk and will be operated according to manufacturer's recommendations.
 - 1) Volunteers may assist desk officers.
 - 2) A supervisor must approve any demonstration of the system.
- b. Keep one copy of the owner's manual at the front desk at all times. Store additional copies in the Administrative Office.
- c. Front desk personnel will immediately contact a supervisor to report any problems.
- d. Only a supervisor can direct personnel to reset the surveillance camera equipment.
- e. Prior to the end of their tour of duty, desk personnel must determine if the surveillance system equipment is working properly and bring any problems to the attention of their immediate supervisor.
 - 1) Make a blotter entry if the surveillance camera equipment cannot be reset indicating the date and time the equipment is placed out of service. The entry will also note if a service representative was notified.
 - 2) If a service representative cannot be notified, a first shift supervisor or the Administrative Assistant will ensure the service representative is notified as soon as possible.

2. Criminal Activity

- a. Desk personnel will broadcast serious or violent incidents/crimes.
- b. Suspicious activity
 - 1) Contact Police Communications Section (PCS) by phone to report suspicious activity.
 - 2) Send a follow-up Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) message to all district cars, from the desk officer, using the MDIST1, MDIST2, MDIST3, MDIST4, OR MDIST5 format giving an accurate description of the individual(s) and activity.
- c. Make blotter entries for any arrest or serious activity captured by a surveillance camera.

3. Security

- a. Video tapes
 - 1) Storage and security of the tapes are the responsibilities of the Administrative Assistant.
 - a) Store tapes in a secure area.
 - 2) Change tapes every 24 hours at the beginning of first relief.
 - 3) Rotate tapes every 14 days.
 - a) Label tapes Sunday through Saturday and rotate in daily order.
 - b) Keep three spare tapes on hand.

4. Request For Tapes

- a. Due to the rotation of tapes, any request for a tape must be made prior to the end of the 14-day retention period.

- b. Submit Department requests for copies of tapes on a Form 606, Video/Audio Recording Form to the district where the tape is assigned or stored. Any outside requests must also be submitted on a Form 606, through Records Section to the district maintaining the original recording.
- c. Make duplicate tapes only after the approval of the district commander.
- d. Maintain a tape control log book at each district to track the location of copied tapes. Restrict access to tapes to supervisory personnel only.
 - 1) Maintain the Form 606 at the district for cross reference purposes.
 - 2) Retain the original tape at the district of assignment.
- e. When a request for a tape is made from outside of the Department, make and maintain a second copy of the tape in the file at the district for one year.
- f. Court tapes
 - 1) When tapes are held for court, the officer/supervisor will complete the Form 606 and the copied video will be processed in accordance with Procedure 12.715 - Property and Evidence: Accountability, Processing, Storage, and Release

5. Supervisor Responsibilities

- a. Supervisors will ensure:
 - 1) All personnel follow established procedure for use of the surveillance system equipment.
 - 2) Damaged equipment is repaired or replaced as needed.

- 3) An adequate supply of blank tapes is maintained.

B. Community Cameras

1. Operating Community Cameras

- a. Community camera software will be installed on a computer at the following Department locations:
 - 1) Police Communications Section (PCS)
 - 2) Districts 1, 2, 4, and 5
 - a) Neighborhood Squad
 - b) Investigative Unit
 - c) Violent Crimes Squad
 - 3) Central Vice Control Section
 - a) General Vice Enforcement Unit (GVEU)
 - b) Street Corner Unit (SCU)
- b. The officer using the community camera is responsible for operating the equipment according to the vendor and manufacturer's recommendations.
 - 1) Officers may be assisted by trained community volunteers. A list of approved volunteers is available through the COP Coordinator's office.
 - 2) A supervisor must approve any demonstration of the system.
- c. Keep a copy of the community camera instruction manual at each computer terminal. Request additional copies through the COP Coordinator's Office.
- d. Officers using the community camera will immediately contact the COP Coordinator's Office to report any problems.

- 1) Make a blotter entry if the community camera is not operational indicating the date and time the equipment is taken out of service and whether the vendor's technical support was notified.
- 2) CitiWatcher technical support can be contacted at 877-724-8928.

2. Criminal Activity

- a. The officer observing the activity will immediately broadcast serious or violent incidents/crimes over the radio.
- b. Contact PCS by phone to report any suspicious activity.
- c. Make blotter entries for any arrest or serious activity captured by a community camera.

3. Security

- a. Store images from community cameras for a period of ninety (90) days.
 - 1) All images are the property of the Department and are stored by CitiWatcher.

4. Request for Images

- a. Images for the immediate seven (7) day period can be accessed through the Internet by those officers trained to use the community camera system by completing the Footage Request Form.
- b. Submit requests for images on a Footage Request Form available on the website. Any outside agency requests must be submitted on a Form 606, through Records Section.
- c. Maintain an image control log book at each district/section to track the location of copied incidents.

- 1) Maintain the Form 606 at the district for cross reference purposes.

- d. When a request for an incident is made from outside of the Department, make and maintain a second copy of the incident in the file at the district where the incident was captured.

- e. Court disc(s)

- 1) When discs are held for court, the officer/supervisor will complete the Form 606 and the disc(s) will be processed in accordance with Procedure 12.715 - Property and Evidence: Accountability, Processing, Storage, and Release

5. Supervisor Responsibilities

- a. Supervisors will ensure:

- 1) All personnel follow established procedure for use of the community camera equipment.
- 2) Damaged equipment is repaired or replaced as needed.